

REMARKS

In the June 15, 2004 Office Action, claims 1-2 and 6-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,246,377 to Kawahara et al. and claim 11 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kawahara et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,238,420 to Miyahara et al. Dependent claims 3-5 and 9-10 are indicated as being allowable if rewritten into independent form.

By the present amendment, claims 1, 3, 7 and 10 are amended, and claim 9 cancelled, leaving claims 1-8, 10 and 11 pending in the application with claims 1 and 7 being independent. Independent claim 1 is amended to clarify that the housing module includes a slot extending from its center to its outer perimeter and the slot receives a hub of the cover module. Because the housing module 11 of Kawahara et al. does not include any type of slot for receiving a hub, claim 1 is allowable over Kawahara et al. Independent claim 7 is amended to include the language of allowable dependent claim 9, thereby placing claim 7 in allowable condition. Each rejection is discussed in detail below.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-2 and 6-8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Kawahara et al. Kawahara et al. fails to disclose, teach or suggest all of the limitations of independent claim 1, as amended. In particular, amended claim 1 recites that the housing module includes a slot extending from the center to the outer perimeter of the housing module and that the slot receives a hub extending from the cover module. The device of Kawahara et al., includes a housing 11 with a hollow cylindrical member 11b that receives a hollow cylindrical member 20a of rotator 20. Although, the hollow cylindrical member 11b of the housing receives the cylindrical member 20a of the rotator 20, the hollow cylindrical

member 20a is not a slot that extends from the center of the housing to its outside perimeter, as recited in the claimed invention. Instead, the hollow cylindrical member 11b of Kawahara et al. defines a central opening in the module 11 that is confined by a wall located inside the outer perimeter of the housing module 11

Therefore, Kawahara et al. fails to anticipate claim 1, as amended, and thus the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) should be withdrawn and claim 1 allowed. Dependent claims 2-6 are also allowable for the same reasons.

Regarding independent claim 7, the language of original dependent claim 9 is added to claim 7. Because dependent claim 9 is indicated as being allowable if rewritten into independent form, claim 7, as amended, is in allowable condition. Dependent claims 9, 10 and 11 are also allowable for the same reason.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §103

Claim 11 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kawahara et al. in view of Miyahara et al. As discussed above, independent claim 7 is in allowable condition. Therefore, dependent claim 11 is also in allowable condition and the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) should be withdrawn.

Allowable Subject Matter

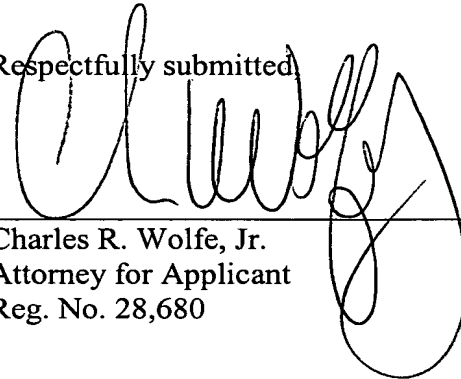
Applicants acknowledge and appreciate the indication of allowable subject matter in dependent claims 3-5 and 9-10. In response, the language of dependent claim 9 is added to independent claim 7 and claim 9 is cancelled. Dependent claim 10 is amended to correct its dependency.

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In view of the foregoing, claims 1-8, 10 and 11 are believed to be in allowable condition. Prompt and favorable action is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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